

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 01576 041614Z

43

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SUBJECT: MAGISTRATE INVESTIGATING MSI AT CENTER OF JUDICIAL STORM

REF: ROME A-49, 1/25/74

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE HIGH MAGISTRATE INTERROGATING MSI PARTY SECRETARY ALMIRANTE ON CHARGES OF HAVING RECONSTITUTED THE FASCIST PARTY IS AT THE CENTER OF A JUDICIAL STORM INVOLVING ACCUSATIONS OF OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE IN A NUMBER OF SENSITIVE INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING STATE CONTROLLED ENTERPRISES. THE MAGISTRATE HAS COUNTER-ATTACKED CHARGING WIDESPREAD POLICE CORRUPTION AND MAFIA TIES. THE NET EFFECT OF THE CASE HAS BEEN TO PRODUCE CALLS FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF BOTH THE POLICE AND MAGISTRACY AND A FURTHER DECLINE IN PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE PROBITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF KEY GOVERNMENT ORGANS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JANUARY 24, THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL OF THE ROME APPEALS COURT, CARMELO SPAGNUOLO, INTERROGATED ITALIAN SOCIAL MOVEMENT-NATIONAL RIGHT PARTY SECRETARY ALMIRANTE. THE MSI CHIEF IS ACCUSED OF VIOLATING THE 1952 SCEBLA LAW FORBIDDING RECONSTITUTION OF THE FASCIST PARTY. ALMIRANTE'S PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY WAS LIUFTED IN MAY LAST YEAR TO PERMIT HIS INTERROGATION AND POSSIBLE TRIAL (ROME A-49). ALTHOUGH ALMIRANTE'S INTERROGATION DATE HAD REPORTEDLY BEEN DECIDED A MONTH EARLIER, HIS CONFRONTATION WITH SPAGNUOLO TOOK

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PAGE 02 ROME 01576 041614Z

PLACE JUST AS THE HIGH MAGISTRATE FOUND HIMSELF THE OBJECT OF A

SPATE OF ACCUSATIONS AND CRITICISM.

3. IN EARLY JANUARY SPANGNUOLO WAS DONOUNCED BY AN EX-CONVICT WITH MAFIA CONNECTIONS FOR HAVING PLAYED THE GO-BETWEEN IN CONTRACTS BETWEEN A HIGH POLICE OFFICIAL, QUESTORE ANGELO MANGANA, AND MAFIA BOSS FRANK COPPOLA IN CONNECTION WITH ALLEGED ATTEMPTS BY MANGANO TO BLACKMAIL COPPOLA. MANGANO HAD BEEN THE TARGET OF A NEARLY SUCCESSFUL ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT IN APRIL 1973 AND COPPOLA WAS ARRESTED IN JUNE AS SUSPECTED INSTIGATOR OF THE ATTACK. OTHER DENOUNCIATIONS AGAINST SPAGNUOLO FOLLOWED, CNCLUDING ACCUSATIONS THAT HE HAD OBSTRUCTED VARIOUS SENSITIVE JUDICIAL INVESTIGATIONS INCLUDING A CASE INVOLVING USE OF POLITICAL SLUSH FUNDS BY THE STATE OWNED MONTEDISON POWER COMPANY, A CASE INVOLVING FRAUDULENT BIDDING PRACTICES BY THE STATE ROAD BUILDING ORGANIZATION, ANAS, AND AN INVESTIGATION OF A SCANDAL INVOLVING THE STATE RADIO-TELEVISION COROPRATION, RAI.

4. SPANGNUOLO HAS BROUGHT LAW SUITS AGAINST HIS ACCUSERS AND WILL PRESENT HIS CASE TO THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL OF MAGISTRATES ON FEBRUARY 5. BOTH HE AND QUESTORE MANGANO WILL ALSO BE QUESTIONED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY ANTI-MAFIA COMMISSION ON LINKS BETWEEN THE MAFIA, POLICE AND MAGISTRACY. SPAGNUOLO'S MOST SENSATIONAL RIPOSTE, HOWEVER, WAS AN "INTERVIEW" PUBLISHED IN THE LEFT OF CENTER WEEKLY IL MONDO JANUARY 24. SPAGNUOLO LATER DENIED THAT THE PUBLISHED INTERVIEW REFLECTED WHAT HE HAD TOLD THE CORRESPONDENT, BUT HIS DENIAL FELL SHORT OF BEING CATEGORIC. MANY COMMENTATORS CONSIDER THAT MUCH OF WHAT WAS PRINTED HAS AT LEAST A BASIS IN FACT WHETHER OR NOT SPANGNUOLO MADE THE PRECISE ALLEGATIONS QUOTED. SPANGNUOLO'S BASIC THESIS AS REFLECTED IN THE "INTERVIEW" IS THAT CORRUPTION, OFTEN INVOLVING COMPLICITY WITH THE MAFIA AND THE USE OF COVERTLY OBTAINED INFORMATION FOR BLACKMAIL, IS RIFE IN THE POLICE AND THAT THE POLICE OR, POSSIBLY, CORRUPT MAGISTATES WERE INVOLVED IN THE ERASURE OF SENSITIVE PORTIONS OF A SET OF INCRIMINATING TAPES RECORDING CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN FRANK COPPOLA AND CERTAIN POLITICIANS.

5. THE POLITICAL FALL OUT FROM THE "SPAGNUOLO CASE" HAS INCLUDED PARLIAMENTARY INTERROGATIONS PRESENTED BY ALMOST EVERY POLITICAL PARTY AND CALLS FOR INVESTIGATION OF THE POLICE AND MAGISTRACY. SO FAR, NO MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURES HAVE BECOME INVOLVED AND ONE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ROME 01576 041614Z

MAJOR FOCUS OF SPECULATION IN THE PRESS AND POLITICAL CIRCLES IS WHO, IF ANYONE, IS ORCHESTRATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CASE AND WHO STANDS TO BENEFIT MOST FROM IT. IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHETHER THE "SPAGNUOLO CASE" WILL LEAD, OR BE ALLOWED TO LEAD, TO HIGH PLACES OR WHETHER IT WILL INSTEAD BE CHanneLED TOWARD UNEARTHING ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE OF MAFIA LINKED CORRUPTION AT A LOWER LEVEL. THE NET EFFECT SO FAR HAS BEEN , UNFORTUNATLEY BUT PREDICITABLY, T UNDERMINE FURTHER PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE PROBITY

AND EFFECTIVNESS OF BOTH THE MAGISTRACY AND THE POLICE. VOLPE

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